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Viewing cable 09CARACAS1090, CANADIAN-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS AT A LOW POINT

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09CARACAS1090**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09CARACAS1090	2009-08-19 18:56	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Caracas

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.semana.com/nacion/wikileaks-venezuela-caracas-sucursal-habana/158411-3.aspx>

VZCZCXRO6493
PP RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR
DE RUEHCV #1090/01 2311856
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 191856Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3579
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0080
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0015
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 001090

SIPDIS

HQSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEPARTMENT PASS TO AID/OTI (RPORTER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2029
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: CANADIAN-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS AT A LOW POINT

CARACAS 00001090 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Darnall Steuart,
for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶11. (C) Summary: In a meeting with Ambassador Duddy August 18, Canadian Ambassador to Venezuela Perry Calderwood said that Canada's bilateral relations with Venezuela were as bad as they had ever been. In addition to disrupting Canada's Diplomatic pouches, not issuing license plates, and making it more difficult to receive timely visas, Venezuela blackballed Canada's petition to join the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission because of Canada's position on Cuba in the Organization of American States. Calderwood also discussed Canadian representation of Israel in Venezuela, which began shortly after President Chavez expelled the Israeli Ambassador and broke relations in January 2009. Calderwood sees President Chavez's recent legislation and measures as an effort to consolidate power before his popularity collapses under serious governance problems. End Summary.

VENEZUELA BLOCKS CANADIAN IATTC MEMBERSHIP

¶12. (C) Calderwood said that Canada had hoped to join the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) in June. Letters of no objection are required from all 16 members before a new member can join the IATTC. Calderwood said the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (GBRV) refused to send its letter for several months; all other members sent in letters. During the June meeting, which Canada attended in the hope the Venezuelan letter would arrive, the GBRV called a second secretary at the Canadian Embassy in Venezuela to say that the GBRV would not allow Canada to join the IATTC because of Canada's position on Cuba in the Organization of American States.

¶13. (C) While this kind of political retaliation was unexpected, Calderwood said, the bilateral relationship has been difficult for some time. There has not been a Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada for three years. Calderwood has little access to the GBRV, and the Canadian Embassy has had its Diplomatic pouch delivery disrupted on two occasions.

The Embassy has been unable to acquire Diplomatic license plates, and a new policy, of which they were informed by phone, stipulates that Diplomatic carnets must be returned before a new Diplomatic visa for the replacement officer will be issued. That policy, Calderwood said, has been implemented unevenly. The Canadian Minister of State for the Americas would like to visit Caracas in September if he can expect to meet Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro; this visit would be the first for a senior Canadian official in ten years.

REPRESENTING ISRAEL

¶14. (C) According to Calderwood, days after Chavez expelled the Israeli Ambassador and broke relations in January 2009, the Israeli government asked the Canadian government at very senior levels to represent Israeli interests in Venezuela, as it does in Cuba. Since then, the two countries have worked out a Memorandum of Understanding to allow Canada to accept Israeli visa and passport applications in Caracas, which will then be sent to the Israeli Embassy in Ottawa for processing.

Canada also provides assistance to Israeli citizens in Venezuela, and relays official messages between the two countries. To date these messages have dealt exclusively with the need for each countries' former representatives to return their respective Diplomatic carnets. Calderwood understands that Spain has been asked to represent Venezuelan interests in Israel. Canada has expanded its relationship with the Jewish community in Venezuela, and Calderwood notes that overt anti-Semitism from the GBRV seems to have subsided in the wake of the strong international response following the attacks on the synagogues earlier this year.

¶ 15. (C) Calderwood thinks that the recent flurry of legislation and the closure of 34 media outlets is part of a GBRV effort to consolidate power in the executive before Chavez's popularity declines. He said the problems of governance, such as crime and inflation, are beyond Chavez's capabilities to solve. Chavez knows his popularity will run out, Calderwood said, so he's doing everything he can now to ensure that he will stay in power.

¶ 16. (C) Comment: Canadian representatives in Venezuela have been active in promoting human rights and discretely providing venues for groups opposing GBRV policies to speak with other Diplomats. Some of the diplomatic difficulties mentioned by Calderwood could be a result of inefficiency rather than deliberate harassment, and are shared by many foreign missions. Overall their experience mirrors that of the U.S. Embassy. It is unclear if the blocking of Canada's membership in the IATTC is a short-term delay, or an indication of how Venezuela will deal with Canada on future issues. President Chavez appears sensitive to international opinion, but apparently a good relationship with Canada is not a priority.

DUDDY